P-Buckley, William Approved For Release 2004/10/13. CIA-RDP88-01350R000200430002651

Chisel on William Buckley's gravestone that in politics he was never trendy. As a professional conservative in a liberal age, Buckley has thrown barricades across the most traveled thoroughfares of consensus. In 1954 he co-authored a book defending Joe Mc-Carthy just as the rest of the Eastern Establishment was rising in belated revulsion against the rantings of the Wisconsin senator. A decade later, with Sinophilia spreading through Foggy Bottom, Buckley publicly clamored for nuclear strikes against the facilities producing Chinese atomic bombs.

This season attacks on the U.S. intelligence services are à la mode. Dirty tricks are out. The CIA is under fire. Agents past and present scurry for the bunkers as politicians and reporters vie to unmask them.

Leave it to Buckley to saily forth now with his first novel, Saving the Queen, a spy thriller that so glorifies the CIA and is so packed with the details of spying that it begs the question: Was William Buckley himself a spook?

"Why, yes. Of course," he readily replies, as if afraid he wasn't going to be asked. He pops his eyes and cocks his jaw in the manner familiar to audiences of his television show Firing Line. That taut grin slices across his face with all the warmth of a Buick grille, circa 1957. Bill Buckley is pleased to play the heretic.

Save for his occasional lapses into syntactical arabesques and facial spasms, Buckley is a surprisingly relaxed, almost low-key conversationalist. He sinks beside his wife, Pat, into the tented sofa she has installed in a window niche of their waterfront palazzo in Stamford, Conn. The room is a small whirlpool of Haitian apricot, lavender, lime green and yellow. Buckley's den is a more simply decorated sunroom that gives onto a rock garden. His harpsichord is there.

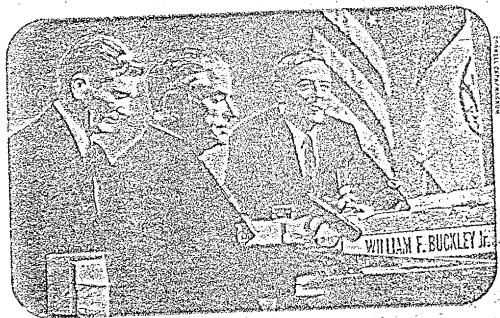
"I was only in the agency briefly," Buckley resumes again, "just after l left Yale. I was based in Mexico City under E. Howard Hunt. You may know I'm his children's godfather." (Buckley was she died in a plane crash proved For Release 2004/10/113 of 51A RDP 88-01350 R000 2004 3000 1-6 both a little behind . you more about it all, but of course Hydrogen bomb secrets have been schedule due to the war. In officer's also executor of Mrs. Hunt's will after you more about it all, but of course acents make a promise not to. I take



William Buckley's first book, written after college, was 'God and Man at Yale,' a highly critical reaction to his alma mater.



married Vancouver-born Pat Taylor, who attended Vassar for two years.



Asked what he'd do if he beat Lindsay and Beame in the '55 New York mayoral race, Buckley snapped: "Demand a recount."

plicably, Buckley reveals both his CIA alias and the function he performed in that disguise. "You must promise not to print that though." Buckley will tell anyone his stint as a spy was humdrum to the point of "sheer boredom. Heft the agency after about eight months."

There is nothing dull, however, about the adventures of Blackford Oakes, the 1950ish Ubermensch of Buckley's novel. Oakes's first mission is to insinuate himself, at CIA expense, into the coterie of dashing people sur-

leaking to Stalin from the loftiest ech-

Queen Caroline herself. The requirements of undercover penetration (a Buckleyan metaphor that reaches fuller dimension in the queen's boudoir) are stimulating enough to make young Blackford an agency man for life and, not incidentally, to have vaulted the novel onto best-seller lists.

Caroline bears no resemblance to Elizabeth II, but much of Blackford Oakes is, of course, Buckley. Says his friend and ideological bête grise J. K. Galbraith: "The book is an unparalleled exercise in self-revelation."

Oakes graduated from Yale in 1951, candidate training at Ft. Benning, Ga. in 1944, until "some computer discov-confinue